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RUNNING HEAD: Resource Theory and Interpersonal Evaluation Theory

The Complementary Natures of Resource Theory and Interpersonal Evaluation Theory

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Abstract

We examined how resource theory (RT) and interpersonal evaluation theory (IET) might complement one another. Individuals trade resources, but which resources do they prefer to trade with which sorts of persons? RT proposes six classes of resources and IET proposes a set of prototypical person types. We hypothesized that preferences for resource exchanges vary depending on the resource and the type of person with whom one exchanges resources. Support for this hypothesis would show that RT and IET together can improve the understanding of interpersonal resource exchanges. Preferences of volunteers for receiving the six types of resources, after offering the six resources to the four IET person types that define the cardinal points of the IET circumplex (Boss, Friend, Employee, and Enemy), were analyzed. Some resources (especially status and love) were preferred more than others, almost regardless of the person type from whom they were received. Participants almost always preferred to receive resources from a Boss, Friend, Employee, and Enemy, in that order, which supports the IET hypothesis that preferences for receiving resources depends on the nature of the resource's interpersonal source. However, compelling support for the primary hypothesis that both resource and interpersonal source matter emerged from the resource x person type interactions, which were strongly significant in general and for each resource type offered. In sum, the results clearly demonstrate that to understand interpersonal resource exchanges, both the resource and the person type must be considered.

### The Complementary Nature of Resource Theory and Interpersonal Evaluation Theory

Fifty years ago, exchange theories came to prominence in social psychology through the work of Thibaut and Kelley (1959) and Homans (1958). Social interaction, particularly satisfying social interaction, was seen as a consequence of exchanging rewards, in particular rewards that exceeded costs, leading to a “profit” outcome that meets or exceeds a person’s expectations, or “comparison level.” Later, Foa and Foa (1974) also postulated that social life can be characterized by the exchange of resources, but specified the types of commodities that are exchanged. These are, by now, the familiar six: love, status, information, money, goods, and services.

One important value of this advance, to set out the specific types of resources exchanged in social life, was to set the stage for more focused theories; if the periodic table of the chemical elements may be invoked as a model, the Foa and Foa set of postulated resources helped to specify and organize the resources people exchange. This has important heuristic value as the science of social interaction progresses.

The main purpose of the present chapter is to suggest a further kind of organization, in the same spirit. We propose that *who the other person is* should be considered. Just as Foa and Foa (1974) realized the value of categorizing the types of resources exchanged, rather than thinking of resources as an amorphous mass of possibilities, we suggest that progress will be made if a similar effort is made to categorize the types of individuals who exchange the resources. In brief, this chapter proposes and examines how resource theory (RT; Foa, Converse, Törnblom, & Foa, 1993; Foa & Foa, 1974) and interpersonal evaluation theory (IET; Gifford, 2000; 2010) may complement each other.

*Needs as the Foundation*

The study of human needs has a long history in psychology (e.g., Maslow, 1954; Murray et al., 1938). Needs were notably acknowledged as part of interpersonal life by Murray and his colleagues (1938) in their early need-press theory, which proposed a list of 20 needs that people try to fulfill. The idea of needs and the motivation to satisfy them was later presented by Maslow (1954), who proposed that individuals have a hierarchy of needs that they strive to fulfill. Needs have recently been investigated with increased interest (e.g., Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Fiske, 2003; Pittman & Zeigler, 2007; Pyszczynski, Solomon, & Greenberg, 2003). Not all needs are social, of course, but for needs that are social in nature, clearly it is other persons who help us to fulfill those needs.

Both RT and IET consider needs as the foundation for their theories' social dynamics. Foa and Foa (1974) introduced RT, which proposes that personal interactions are motivated by a drive to fulfill certain resource-based needs. They propose that social interactions are much like the barter-and-trade systems found in the early periods of human civilization. A need is created by a deficiency in a particular resource. A person is said to seek to fill that deficiency, or need, by interacting with others who have an abundance of the resource in which they are deficient (Foa & Foa, 1974). A resource is defined as "anything transacted in an interpersonal situation" and is further refined as "any item, concrete or symbolic, which can become the object of exchange among people" (Foa, Tömbloom, Foa, & Converse, 1993, p. 2).

Following the development of a measure of perceived needs for the six resources (Foa & Bosman, 1979), RT theorists began to explore the differential perceived needs of groups (Foa & Krieger, 1985). In contrast, IET ultimately draws its inspiration from the work

of Murray et al. (1938). The RT tradition focuses on the need for the six classes of resources, whereas IET focuses on the need for types of persons who are seen as potential suppliers of key social needs. The needs in RT theory are straightforward in terms of their proposed origin; those in IET theory have taken a less simple path, which requires some explication.

*Who are these Others?*

Other people are crucial for need fulfilment, yet they often are treated generically or discussed as mere examples in the literature on needs and goals, often because the focus is on the particular needs under consideration. For example, “Winch’s [1958] theory of need complementarity proposes two forms of interpersonal attraction based upon the need structures of individuals in a dyad. In one, persons *A* and *B* are complementary in need structure because *A* is high and *B* is low in the same need” (Second & Backman, 1964, p. 252).

Our central assertion is that interacting individuals deserve more specific attention, primarily because they are not all the same, or interchangeable; they should not to be dismissed as “*A*” and “*B*.” Oddly, after decades of social psychology research, interacting individuals have hardly become any less anonymous. We believe that without an elaboration and differentiation of the types of persons sought, as individuals attempt to fulfil their needs, a complete account of social interaction is lacking.

Put another way, if the fulfilment of many or even most needs requires interacting with other people, *who are these others?* As Murray and his colleagues (1938) wrote over 70 years ago: “What should interest us particularly is the nature of the [social] objects...” (p. 107). However, since their injunction, no systematic research or theory has focused on the taxonomic structure of social goal objects. The “other” usually is ignored in terms of being a

particular sort of person, or assumed to be “anyone” who might satisfy a need or a goal.

Of course, one obvious reason for this lack of systematic attention to the nature of “others” is their very numerosity and diversity. As Murray et al. (1938) also aptly observed, “It can have no scientific meaning to say that an S likes Bill Snooks, or enjoys the works of Fred Fudge...” (p. 107). Despite their awareness of the problem, even Murray and his colleagues did not develop a taxonomy of social objects, beyond proposing two simple distinctions among them: the other’s *status* (e.g., higher status, more dominant or competent versus lower status, less dominant and competent) and *ideology* (e.g., program of action, strategy, or philosophy). However, this failure to pursue a more complete taxonomy does not mean that social objects should not be considered, even to Murray et al.: “... the object, as such, can have no scientific status until it is analysed and formulated as a compound of psychologically relevant attributes” (1938, p. 107-8).

Yet few have systematically tackled the problem of how to deal with the myriad of potential goal objects (one notable exception is [Törnblom & Nilsson, 1993](#)). Rather, modern theories such as self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), terror management theory (Pyszczynski, Solomon, & Greenberg, 2003), and core social motive theory (Fiske, 2003) are largely devoted to another worthy task, that of reducing the long, somewhat unworkable lists of *needs* posited by early researchers (e.g., Murray et al., 1938) into more manageable, parsimonious, and heuristic taxonomies.

#### *Toward a Compendium of, and Structure, for Need-Fulfilling Person Types*

Therefore, one necessary step toward scientific progress is to discover a way to structure, classify, or organize the myriad of “others” in a parsimonious way. Our overall goal has been to further this objective. The two specific purposes of this effort are (a) to

create a reasonably comprehensive list of goal objects, which we define as person types, and (b) to seek a reasonably simple structure for them. A fundamental premise of this investigation is that a more complete understanding of social motivation and, indeed, of all social cognition and interaction, requires knowing more about *which* sort of other person is sought for *which* sorts of needs and goals (cf. Brewer, 1988).

Individuals often, or even constantly, assess and re-assess one another. Until now, person perception research has focused on trait-like attributes of other persons (e.g., energetic, assured, or cold; Asch, 1946), characteristics that might serve as bases for judgments of others' suitability for interdependent relations (e.g., trustworthiness or cooperativeness; Cottrell, Neuberg, & Li, 2006), or prototypes, exemplars, categories, or social stereotypes (Andersen & Klatzky, 1987; Anderson & Sedikides, 1991; Brewer, 1988; Cantor & Mischel, 1979; Fiske, Lin, & Neuberg, 1999). However, these approaches have not set out to discover a compendium of person types, nor to reduce such a compendium to an economical taxonomy. In one partial exception to this, research participants were asked which goals their participants had in terms of 5 types of significant other: mother, friend, romantic partner, classmate, and roommate (Fitzsimons & Bargh, 2003). One suspects that these five person types were selected ad hoc, to roughly represent "significant others," rather than with any taxonomic goal.

In general, science cannot advance without some organization of complex constructs or items; chemistry's periodic table may be the prime example, but the interpersonal circle (e.g., Wiggins, 1979) and Big Five personality framework (e.g., Costa & McCrae, 1996) are instances of construct organization that have importantly aided the understanding of personality and re-invigorated research in that area.

*A Functional Approach*

We propose a functionalist solution to this problem, and this is where IET returns to the theoretical vicinity of RT. IET suggests that people view others as potential need-fulfillers: that is, when individuals have a need, they seek a person who has, or is believed to have, particular *resources* to fulfil that need.<sup>1</sup> For example, one might predict that a person with a strong need for competence (Deci & Ryan, 2000) is likely to seek a teacher, mentor, or coach to help fulfil that need. Those with a need for power might be expected to seek individuals they can lead, those who find fulfilment in being a follower presumably will seek someone to lead or inspire them, and those who need a challenge presumably will seek opponents.<sup>2</sup>

*The Roots of Interpersonal Evaluation Theory*

Although many distinguished thinkers have deeply considered interpersonal perception and processes (e.g., Anderson, 1962; Anderson & Sedikides, 1991; Asch, 1946; Brunswik, 1956, pp. 26-40, Cantor & Mischel, 1979; Homans, 1958; Kenny, 1994; Laing, Phillipson, & Lee, 1966; Maslow & Mintz, 1956; McArthur & Baron, 1983; Murray et al., 1938; Wiggins, 1979, 1980), the interpersonal circle system of Leary et al. (1957) seems particularly relevant to this investigation's goals because of its fundamental premise that psychological constructs often form a particular structure.

For example, Leary et al.'s (1957) work has inspired the discovery of circumplacial structures for dispositions (e.g., Kiesler, 1983; Wiggins, 1979), emotions (Russell, 1980), nonverbal behavior (Gifford, 1994), and clinical constructs (Benjamin, 2005). In most of these structures, the primary axes may be described in terms of agency and communion (Bakan, 1966), that is, power, control, and mastery (and their antitheses) along one

dimension, and love, warmth, and nurturance (and their antitheses) along the other.<sup>3</sup> Some social psychological theories also propose central constructs that resemble these main axes. For example, the primary social cognition judgments are said to be about competence and warmth (Fiske, Cuddy, & Glick, 2007).

One important benefit of circumplex-based models is that their structures suggest specific implications about the relations between and among their constituent constructs, something that mere lists do not. Thus, the present research seeks to discover whether a circumplacial structure might exist for person types.

#### *The Hypothesized Structure of Person-Types*

Therefore, we selected the circumplex as a general working hypothesis for this potential structure. Given the role-like nature of the person types, to translate agency into power-oriented person types, and communion into love-oriented person types seemed a reasonable starting point (see Figure 1). Thus, the agency or power axis might be expected to be represented by person types ranging from Boss to Employee, and the communion or love axis might be expected to be represented by person types ranging from Friend to Enemy. The off-axis person types might be expected to be combinations of these primary axes. The Teacher (upper right) is a somewhat powerful person who is liked. The Ally (lower right) is a weaker but appreciated person. The Student (lower left) is a weaker person who requires effort and thus, while not an enemy, is loved less. The Challenger (upper left) is a somewhat powerful person who, while not hated like an enemy, is not loved either. The center of the circumplex might well be inhabited by the “nobody,” an other whom one does not know well at all, and therefore is not assessed as having any particular typological character (see Figure 1).<sup>4</sup>

*A Problem and a Proposed Solution*

Resource theory proposes that six classes of resources are exchanged: love, status, information, money, goods, and services. It proposes a general basis for human social interaction, but says little about the different *types of people* with whom one exchanges resources in everyday social interactions. Of course, resource theory has not ignored that exchanges occur between particular (as opposed to random) persons. For example, resources are said to derive their value from the “identity” of the provider (source) of the resource (Foa, 1971), and exchanges have been examined in terms of the particularist-to-universalist nature of the source in relation to the particularist-to-universalist nature of the resource, and how these match or not (e.g., Tömbloom & Nilsson, 1993). So far, however, resource theory has not considered the nature of the source or provider outside that person’s particularism-universalism.

Interpersonal evaluation theory (IET; Gifford, 2000, 2010), proposes a taxonomy of person types that would distill the very large and therefore scientifically unmanageable number of others that individuals encounter in their social world into a manageably parsimonious set of person types. These types are based on prototypical roles and are defined from the actor’s perspective (i.e., how they are experienced). They may, but do not necessarily, correspond to the formal roles in the actor’s life. For example, one may experience one’s spouse as a Boss without the spouse actually being one’s employer. IET proposes that individuals search for others in their social environment who might satisfy their needs. However, its limitation has been that it has not directly considered which kind of *resources* individuals prefer to exchange.

Thus, in sum, RT focuses on resources without considering differences in need-satisfaction seeking, and IET focuses on the latter without considering the former. This study

Comment [RDG1]: I suppose!  
Correct me if I’ve missed something here.

examines the potential connections between the two theories by investigating which of the six resources, as defined by RT, people prefer to exchange with four key IET person types: Boss, Friend, Employee, and Enemy.<sup>5</sup> These four person types are defined as follows: Friend, someone with whom you could talk for hours; Boss, someone who has supervised you (either on the job or in another life activity); Employee, someone whom you have supervised (either on the job or in another life activity); and Enemy, someone with whom you have fought or struggled.

The general hypothesis is that preferences for receiving resources in return for offering different resources to different person types vary with both the resource and the person type. Because this hypothesis has not been tested before, more specific hypotheses about precisely how these differences would play out are not proposed. However, noting that RT arranges the six resource classes into two facets, particularism-universalism (ranging from love, services, and status to information, money, and goods), and concreteness-abstractness (ranging from service and goods to status and information), the possibility that these two facets might be related to expressed preferences will be actively explored.

## Method

### *Participants*

212 undergraduate psychology students (170 female, 39 male, and 3 who did not respond to the gender question) initially participated. All volunteered after seeing a notice for the study posted on the research participation system available online to introductory psychology students at a medium-sized Canadian university. Their ages ranged from 18 to 49, but most were 19 to 22, and their average age was 21.

**Comment [RDG2]:** Does the new material on page 6 and 10 help? As usual, in general, I have not read much about RT beyond the very basics. RG

**Comment [IH3]:** You're strongly advised to take a look at a chapter in Foa et al. (1993) entitled "The Effect of Matching Resources to Source on Their Perceived Importance and Sufficiency"!

*Materials and Procedure*

The questionnaire was adapted from one Foa and Foa (1974) used to investigate resource theory. The language was modernized in a few places so that the participants would be better able to easily understand what was being presented to them. Foa and Foa's questionnaire was lengthened so as to include the four IET person types.

When participants visited the website, an introductory page displayed a brief welcome statement, broadly described the study, and presented a consent form. Next, the questionnaire was presented. It consisted of four subsections, one for each of the four person types under investigation (Boss, Friend, Employee, and Enemy).<sup>6</sup> Within each person subsection, six situations were presented in which one of the six resource types (love, money, status, services, goods, or information) was hypothetically offered by the participant to one of the four person types. For example, one interaction scenario read:

*You provide certain information to your Boss, someone who has supervised you (on the job or in another life activity). Rate the desirability of the following options for how you would like the Boss to respond to you, on a scale in which 1 is the least desirable and 7 is the most desirable, in your own opinion).*

Six options were offered, representing the RT resources, for example (only the text in italics was presented to the participants; the non-italicized words identify the resource for this paper's purpose):

*Your Boss expresses respect for you (status); You are made to feel that your Boss enjoys your company (love); Your Boss tells you something that you didn't know beforehand (information); Your Boss gives you money in return (money); Your Boss gives you an object that you like (goods); Your Boss does a favor for you (services).*

In total, each participant responded to 144 items (i.e., for each of the 4 person types, 6 resources were offered to the other person.<sup>7</sup> In each of these 24 situations, the participant's preferences for each of the 6 resources were requested). The order of choices for preferred resources was randomized from situation to situation, in order to reduce monotony that could arise from responding to many similar situations, and to lessen response biases, but the text was not changed.

The questionnaire also contained five randomly placed items which explicitly instructed the participant to select one particular response. This was done to check whether participants were reading each question carefully. Incorrect answers to these items were used as an indicator that a participant was not responding conscientiously. Finally, the participants were asked for basic demographic information: age, gender, and occupation (provided their main occupation was not student).

### Results

Among the 212 participants, 45 answered one or more of the five check questions incorrectly. Although some of these participants may have made an isolated error and provided generally valid data, we removed the data from all 45 of those participants to be careful, which left data provided by 167 participants for the following analyses.

The results for all 144 choices made by each participant may be examined in various ways, depending on the question one wishes to answer. Because this was an exploratory study, we present the results in several ways, but the primary emphasis is on the question of how the 6 resources are related to the 4 person types, in order to explore the complementary nature of the two theories.

In the service of completeness and clarity, the means and standard deviations for each of the 144 choices are presented in Table 1. This allows the reader to consider the participants' preference means for every combination of resource and person type.

*Main Effects: Which Resources are Most Preferred, and From Which Person Types?*

To examine the main and interaction effects, within-subjects two-way ANOVAs were conducted to examine how received resource preference varied by person type, resource, and the interaction of the two. The main purpose of the study was to investigate whether preference varies for different combinations of resources and person types, and so the interactions in these ANOVAs most closely test this general hypothesis. However, preferences also may significantly vary by resource and by person type separately, as main effects. The main effects are reported first, and the interactions after.

First, across *all* person types to which resources were offered, and *all* resource types offered, which resource was most strongly preferred to be received in return by the participants? The grand means, on the 1-to-7 scale, were: services 4.55, money 4.39, goods 4.20, information 4.02, status 3.87, and love 3.85.

Second, which *resource* did participants most prefer to receive, across all four person types to whom they offered that particular resource? For each of the six resources offered, status was most strongly preferred as a resource to be received, and love usually was second or third. Usually, but not uniformly, the remaining preferences were, in order, for services, information, goods, and money. Among the pairwise comparisons for resources, all were significantly different from one another ( $p < .004$ ), except that between money and goods ( $p > .05$ ). See Table 1 for details.

Third, from which *person types* did participants most prefer to receive resources? The nearly universal answer (i.e., for almost every resource offered) was Boss, Friend, Employee, and Enemy, in that order. Among the pairwise comparisons for the person types, all were significantly different ( $p < .001$ ) from each other, except for receiving services from an Employee and from an Enemy ( $p > .05$ ). See Table 1 for details.

*Interactions: Resource Exchange Preferences Depend on Both Resource and Person Type*

The main effects just described have their own interest, but our hypothesis was that the desirability of exchanging resources depends on *both* the person type with whom the exchange is made *and* the resource in question. Thus, in statistical terms, we predicted significant interactions. At the overall level, the ANOVA revealed that participant preferences significantly differed for resources offered to them in return,  $F(5, 157) = 134.99$ ,  $p < .001$ , for the other's person type,  $F(3, 159) = 55.19$ ,  $p < .001$ , and—as hypothesized—for the resource x person type interaction,  $F(15, 147) = 45.96$ ,  $p < .001$ . At the within-subject level, all three effects were also significant (all  $ps < .001$ ); this was also true of all six resource-specific interactions to be described next.

The interaction effects are reflected, at the descriptive level, in the matrix of 24 means (6 resources to be received in return for offering services to each of the 4 person types). What do we see, at this descriptive level? The largest difference in preferences for any *resource* received in return for offering any of the resources was, not surprisingly, between receiving love from a Friend ( $m = 6.41$ ) and receiving love from an Enemy ( $m = 3.48$ ). The largest difference in preferences received from any *person type* was between receiving status from a Friend ( $m = 6.47$ ) and money from a Friend ( $m = 2.04$ ). Of all 24 preferences in the matrix,

the smallest preference was the latter (money from a Friend), and the strongest preference was for receiving status from an Employee ( $m = 6.47$ ).

#### *Preferences by Resource Offered*

*Services.* In the case of services offered to the other person, the multivariate tests showed that participant preferences significantly differed for resources offered to them in return,  $F(5, 157) = 134.99, p < .001$ , the other's person type,  $F(3, 159) = 55.19, p < .001$ , and the resource x person type interaction,  $F(15, 147) = 45.96, p < .001$ . The hypothesis is supported by the latter significant interaction. In the matrix of 24 means (6 resources to be received in return for offering services to each of the 4 other person types), the largest difference in preferences for a resource received in return for offering a service was between receiving love from a Friend ( $m = 6.41$ ) and love from an Enemy ( $m = 3.48$ ). (For details of other differences about services, see Table 1. The same will be true for the following 5 resources. Details are available from the authors.)

*Money.* In the case of money offered to the other person, the multivariate tests showed that participant preferences significantly differed for resources offered to them in return,  $F(5, 154) = 99.18, p < .001$ , the other's person type,  $F(3, 156) = 6.78, p < .001$ , and the resource x person type interaction,  $F(15, 144) = 12.13, p < .001$ . Again, the hypothesis is supported by the latter significant interaction. In the matrix of 24 means, the largest difference in preferences received in return for offering money was between receiving money from a Friend ( $m = 4.15$ ) and receiving money from an Enemy ( $m = 5.70$ ) (!).

*Goods.* In the case of goods offered to the other person, the multivariate tests showed that participant preferences significantly differed for resources offered in return,  $F(5, 152) = 76.61, p < .001$ , the other's person type,  $F(3, 154) = 46.01, p < .001$ , and the resource x

person type interaction,  $F(15, 142) = 19.64, p < .001$ ). Once again, the hypothesis is supported. In the matrix of 24 means, the largest difference for a resource to be received in return for offering goods was between receiving goods from a Friend ( $m = 4.67$ ) and goods from an Enemy ( $m = 2.66$ ).

*Information.* In the case of information offered to others, the multivariate tests showed that participant preferences significantly differed for resources offered to the participant in return,  $F(5, 151) = 161.11, p < .001$ , the other's person type,  $F(3, 153) = 6.78, p = .002$ , and the resource x person type interaction,  $F(15, 141) = 17.84, p < .001$ . Again, the hypothesis is supported by the latter significant interaction. In the matrix of 24 means, the largest difference for a resource to be received in return for offering information was between receiving love from a Friend ( $m = 5.30$ ) and love from an Enemy ( $m = 3.28$ ).

*Status.* In the case of status offered to the other person, the multivariate tests showed that participant preferences significantly differed for resources to be received in return,  $F(5, 145) = 200.86, p < .001$ , the other's person type,  $F(3, 147) = 11.49, p < .001$ , and the resource x person type interaction,  $F(15, 135) = 12.49, p < .001$ . Again, the hypothesis is supported by the latter significant interaction. In the matrix of 24 means, the largest difference for a resource to be received in return for offering status to the other was between receiving love from a Friend ( $m = 6.07$ ) and receiving love from an Enemy ( $m = 4.18$ ).

*Love.* In the case of love offered to another person, the multivariate tests showed that participant preferences significantly differed for resources offered to them in return,  $F(5, 155) = 271.60, p < .001$ , the other's person type,  $F(3, 157) = 17.21, p < .001$ , and the resource x person type interaction,  $F(15, 145) = 12.07, p < .001$ . As for all the other 5 resources offered, the hypothesis is supported. In the matrix of 24 means, the largest

difference for a resource to be received for offering love was between receiving love from a Friend ( $m = 6.57$ ) and love from an Enemy ( $m = 4.96$ ).

#### Discussion

We began by hypothesizing that the other person should be considered in the resource theory of interpersonal exchanges. Based on several varieties of circumplex theory that all suggest two cardinal dimensions—agency and communion—we constructed a typology of persons who might supply eight important social needs derived theoretically from the two dimensions. Four of these, representing the theory's cardinal points, were examined here. The results are strongly affirmative. They show that, across a series of scenarios in which participants hypothetically offered another person each of the six RT resources, preferences vary not only with the resource and with the type of person with whom one is exchanging resources, but also with the combination of the two.

Resource theory—like virtually all social psychology theories—has lacked a parsimonious taxonomy of actors. Interpersonal evaluation theory has lacked specification of the types of resources that people exchange. This study explored the utility of specifying both resource type and person type when explicating social interactions, and found that doing so has value. In short, we suggest that the union of resource theory and interpersonal evaluation theory has important benefits for both theories and for social psychology in general.

#### *Which Resources Do People Prefer to Receive, Regardless of Which They Offer to Whom?*

Although our major point is that both resource type and person type are important, it remains true that some resources are more desirable than others, as a main effect. Both RT and IET propose that individuals seek others for fulfillment of their needs, and that needs are fulfilled by receiving various kinds of resources. One may then reasonably ask which

resources are most preferred to be received, across *all resource types offered to all person types*.

Considered this way, the answer is services, money, and goods, followed by information, status, and love. In terms of the facets that produce RT's resource circumplex (Foa & Foa, 1974), this suggests that the more concrete-universalistic resources are preferred over the more abstract-particularistic resources. As always, this may be a function in part of the sample studied, in our case, Canadian university students, but might it be true more broadly? Among Swedish adults, when collapsed across source type (Figure 1), status, love, and information were rated as more important than service and money (Törnblom & Nilsson, 1993).<sup>8</sup> Thus, the two studies report almost directly opposite conclusions. Whether this difference (change) with culture, economics, or age is legitimate, or was caused by some difference in methods, remains to be resolved.

A small difference, perhaps inconsequential, is that in the present study participants were asked how much they *desired* each resource, whereas in the Törnblom and Nilsson study participants were asked how *important* each resource was. Probably a more noteworthy methodological difference between the two studies is that in the present study, the results were obtained by asking the respondents to report how much they desired to receive each resource *after offering each one of the six resource types* to the other, whereas in the Törnblom and Nilsson study the respondents were not asked about which resources they had first offered to the other person, or whether they had (mentally) offered any at all. Perhaps the reason for the strikingly different results in the two studies lies hidden, in the sense that the resources that the Swedish participants imagined or did not consider as they reported the importance of each resource are unknown.

Comment [kaza4]: Why? Any tentative explanations(s)?

Comment [RDG5]: Giving this a try.

*Which Resources Do People Prefer to Receive, Depending on Which They Offer?*

Alternatively, we may consider the answer in terms of *each resource offered* (while still collapsing across all four person types, as before). From this angle--for *each* of the six resources offered--status was most strongly preferred as a resource to be received, and love usually was second or third. The remaining preferences usually were for services, information, goods, and money, that order. In terms of RT's facets, and again, ignoring person type, people seem to prefer to receive the more abstract- particularistic resources (status and love) over the more concrete- universalistic ones (goods and money). This accords better with the Swedish outcome.

How can the apparent contradiction between this study's first conclusion (that services, money, and goods are more important) , and the second (that status and love are more important) be resolved? The answer may be deduced from Table 1. No matter which resource is offered to the other person, status is the single most-preferred resource to receive in return for offering resources to others. However, *cumulatively* across the preferences for receiving all 6 resources in return, preferences are stronger for resources other than status. Looked at this way, (cumulative) preferences for resources are strongest when service is offered to the other. In one example from Table 1, consider the preferences for receiving status and money when services versus status are offered to the Boss. To receive status in return is most preferred in both cases, as usual (the means are 6.46 and 6.37), but to receive money from the Boss in return for offering the Boss *service* (mean 5.40) is much preferable to receiving money from the Boss for offering the Boss *status* (mean 2.42).

*From Whom Do People Prefer to Receive Resources, Regardless of Which Resource They Offer?*

Third, we may look at the results from the IET point of view: from which person type do people prefer to receive resources? For all resources offered to others, participants most preferred to receive resources from a Boss. Perhaps they expected that Boss could return the greatest amount of any given resource; amounts of resources were not specified, in the scenarios, but perhaps participants inferred that more might be given by a Boss, who presumably controls a larger amount of resources than do other person types. Receiving resources from Friends was preferred next. One might surmise that this next-strongest preference stems from the inference or expectation that the relationship would be strengthened by these exchanges; that further exchanges are likely to occur and that in the longer term, one might benefit more from future exchanges. Employees may have less to offer (cf. Boss), and Enemies may give the least, or may give tainted or even dangerous resources; furthermore, future exchanges are less likely than with Friend.

*Resource Type and Person Type Matter; Which Matter Most?*

The hypothesized interactions demonstrate that although some resources are more preferred in general, and people prefer to receive resources from some person types more than others, combinations of the two are also significantly important. This is our main point. But which combinations are the least and most preferable? The answer is that people least prefer to receive money in return when they give love to a Friend ( $m = 1.37$ ), Employee ( $m = 1.53$ ), or Enemy ( $m = 1.74$ ); they are a bit more eager to receive money from a Boss ( $m = 2.14$ ). What do people want most, from whom? Status is huge: when offering services to an Employee ( $m = 6.56$ ), a Friend ( $m = 6.46$ ), or a Boss ( $m = 6.46$ ), status almost hits the ceiling (7 was the maximum rating). However, receiving status is also important when offering status to those same three person types

status ( $ms = 6.29, 6.42, \text{ and } 6.37$ , respectively). However, happily it would seem, receiving love from a Friend after offering love is also at the very top ( $m = 6.56$ ).

#### *Limitations and Future Research*

Overall, our general hypothesis and broad theoretical postulation was clearly supported. One next step is to learn how these results generalize or not to other categories of people, including younger and older age groups, people in various economic situations, and in other cultures and contexts. We would not be surprised to find that the specific preferences change, given for example that students' lives are materially different from, say, middle-aged people, but we fully expect that the broad findings (that preferences vary with other's person type and with combinations of person type and resource) will be found.

The results are also limited to four of the eight person types in interpersonal evaluation theory. These results and analyses already can be difficult to follow without close attention; to double them would exacerbate the situation. However, the four person types studies are the "cardinal" (north, south, east, and west) points on the IET circumplex, and we see no reason why the intermediate person types (Teacher between Boss and Friend, Aide between Friend and Employee, Student between Employee and Enemy, and Challenger between Enemy and Boss) should not have the same broad outcomes.

Finally, the results are limited to positive exchanges. Sometimes others remove resources, and that has consequences for resource exchanges, including retaliation to various degrees (e.g., *Donnenwerth & Foa, 1974* ). However, the role of person types has not yet been examined in this regard. Some evidence suggests that the seemingly universal choice for retaliation when someone removes (any class of) resource is to withdraw love (*Foa,*

Turner, & Foa, 1972). Again, however one might ask whether the same result would obtain across the range of person types.

Future research should also investigate the degree of experience between the participant and the person types. For example, is there a difference in preferred resources that a person would want to receive from a Boss if he or she were on the first day of work, as opposed to after working for the same Boss for five years?

Other questions concern which resource and how *much* of a resource a person would be willing to give up or receive in each of the scenarios examined in this study. For example, *how much of which* resources are people willing to give up in order to fulfill their love needs? Many novels and historical events attest to the suggestion that some people are willing to give up startling amounts of their resources, but scientific investigations of these amounts are lacking. This and many other important questions remain as the complexities of resource exchanges with various person types are explored.

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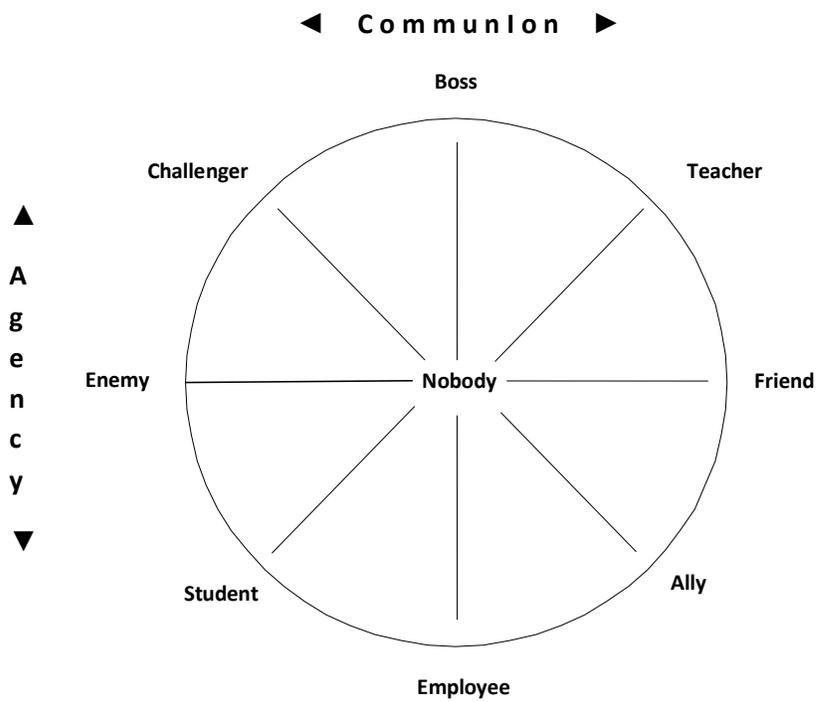
Table 1

Preferences for Receiving a Resource After Offering a Resource to Another Person,  
by Person Type and Resource ( $n = 167$ )

Resource Received:	Resource Given											
	Services		Love		Money		Goods		Status		Information	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
	Boss											
Status	6.46	0.96	5.96	1.34	5.84	1.78	5.47	1.62	6.37	1.06	6.02	1.34
Love	5.43	1.31	5.87	1.40	4.43	1.84	4.46	1.74	5.48	1.47	4.25	1.78
Information	4.47	1.46	4.22	1.52	3.12	1.64	3.40	1.56	4.13	1.73	4.50	1.78
Money	5.40	1.54	2.14	1.60	5.10	1.84	3.95	1.93	2.42	1.62	3.04	1.80
Goods	4.08	1.79	3.14	1.73	3.58	1.78	4.61	1.77	2.82	1.57	3.00	1.66
Service	4.84	1.48	3.35	1.82	5.13	1.46	4.95	1.49	3.48	1.57	4.30	1.63
	Friend											
Status	6.46	0.98	6.30	1.08	5.88	1.44	5.61	1.58	6.42	1.12	6.16	1.17
Love	6.43	1.04	6.56	0.93	4.92	1.88	5.34	1.86	6.10	1.25	5.37	1.76
Information	4.78	1.68	4.06	1.82	3.13	1.73	3.47	1.75	4.03	1.91	4.72	1.93
Money	2.04	1.50	1.37	0.98	4.17	2.10	2.64	1.79	1.64	1.22	1.78	1.41
Goods	3.27	1.83	2.84	1.85	3.37	1.79	4.65	1.84	2.48	1.54	2.53	1.61
Service	5.22	1.50	2.81	1.74	5.19	1.52	4.90	1.59	3.29	1.74	4.02	1.71
	Employee											
Status	6.56	0.86	6.05	1.33	5.69	1.54	5.61	1.60	6.29	1.16	5.90	1.36
Love	5.47	1.40	5.93	1.47	4.38	1.85	4.57	1.81	5.34	1.52	4.57	1.83
Information	3.75	1.70	3.52	1.84	2.79	1.65	3.19	1.57	3.67	1.80	4.36	1.87
Money	2.31	1.81	1.53	1.26	4.81	2.10	3.05	1.99	1.80	1.37	2.05	1.44
Goods	2.43	1.67	2.36	1.58	3.09	1.91	4.22	1.89	2.43	1.46	2.60	1.53
Service	4.50	1.94	2.79	1.77	4.65	1.73	4.77	1.61	3.42	1.79	4.31	1.71
	Enemy											
Status	5.95	1.66	5.67	1.66	5.32	1.85	5.19	1.91	6.10	1.41	5.43	1.75
Love	3.50	1.95	4.99	2.01	3.57	2.02	3.58	1.92	4.16	2.01	3.32	1.80
Information	3.66	1.98	3.69	1.95	3.16	1.88	3.19	1.84	3.57	1.90	4.34	2.07
Money	3.78	2.25	1.74	1.44	5.67	1.80	4.20	2.33	2.26	1.73	2.78	1.90
Goods	3.34	2.10	2.68	1.89	3.72	2.00	4.70	1.95	2.69	1.64	3.01	1.71
Service	4.95	1.88	2.99	1.90	4.92	1.87	4.71	1.71	3.49	1.88	4.63	1.83

Figure Caption

Figure 1. The interpersonal evaluation theory circumplex. IET proposes that others begin, in our experience of them, as unknowns (Nobody) and evolve with experience into a person type defined by seeming to have more or less power and be loved more or less. With further experience, the other's person type may change from that type to another.



Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> IET also proposes that persons also evaluate themselves, as to how they might or might not satisfy the needs of others, in a parallel manner, although this theme will be developed in future papers.

<sup>2</sup> To regard the other as an enemy, opponent, or challenger may not appear to "satisfy a need," although it certainly seems to for some people: many individuals seek opponents in sports or business as a way of challenging themselves or others. Others even seem to seek (and find) enemies (cf. Adams, 2005; Dodge, 2006; Van Vugt, De Cremer, & Janssen, 2007).

<sup>3</sup> Interestingly, Wiggins' (1979) approach to personality as a circumplex drew upon the Foas' ideas.

<sup>4</sup> The eight major person types are, around the circumplex from the top: Boss, Teacher, Friend, Ally, Employee, Student, Enemy, and Challenger. The person types are based on the two major dimensions that underlie other circumplexes, which are usually described as power and love (Leary, 1957), dominance and warmth (Wiggins, 1979), or agency and communion (Horowitz, 2004).

<sup>5</sup> These four were chosen to be representative of the eight IET person types because the length of the questionnaire, already 288 items, would have doubled if all 8 person types were examined. The four chosen represent the 4 "cardinal" points of the circumplex; the other 4 are intermediate to these four, and thus need not be examined in a first study.

<sup>6</sup> Although it may seem odd to suggest that persons have a need for enemies, many people do have them, and in fact some people do report needing or even valuing enemies (Adams, 2005).

<sup>7</sup> Participants also answered a parallel set of questions about a negative interaction, that is, when the other person removed or deprived the participant of a resource, but because of the length and complexity of the results, that part of the study will be reported elsewhere.

<sup>8</sup> Data for goods were not displayed in Figure 1.